

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (original) A retrieval apparatus, comprising:  
a question sentence input unit receiving a question sentence for retrieval;  
a retrieval execution unit retrieving data from a database and extracting data similar to the question sentence inputted by the question sentence input unit;  
a word contribution degree calculation unit calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to extraction by the retrieval execution unit in a retrieval result extracted by the retrieval execution unit; and  
a word contribution degree output unit outputting the contribution degree calculated by the word contribution degree calculation unit together with a corresponding word.
2. (original) The retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein  
said word contribution degree output unit outputs the corresponding word in a display format reflecting the contribution degree.
3. (original) The retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein  
said word contribution degree output unit outputs the corresponding word using a font reflecting the contribution degree.
4. (original) The retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein  
said word contribution degree output unit outputs the corresponding word in a character size reflecting the contribution degree.
5. (original) The retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein  
said word contribution degree output unit outputs the corresponding word in a color reflecting the contribution degree.

6. (original) The retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said word contribution degree output unit is a display device.
7. (original) The retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said retrieval execution unit divides the question sentence inputted by said question sentence input unit into words, retrieves data from the database for each of the divided words and extracts data similar to the word.
8. (previously presented) A retrieval apparatus, comprising:
  - a question sentence input unit receiving a question sentence for retrieval;
  - a retrieval execution unit retrieving data from a database and extracting data similar to the question sentence inputted by the question sentence input unit;
  - a word contribution degree calculation unit calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to extraction by the retrieval execution unit in a retrieval result extracted by the retrieval execution unit; and
  - a word contribution degree output unit outputting the contribution degree calculated by the word contribution degree calculation unit together with a corresponding word, andwherein said retrieval execution unit divides the question sentence inputted by said question sentence input unit into words, retrieves data from the database for each of the divided words and extracts data similar to the word, and
- wherein said word contribution degree calculation unit further comprises:
  - a high/low-similarity group acquisition unit obtaining both a group of documents with high similarity a group of documents with low similarity from the retrieval result extracted by said retrieval execution unit; and
  - a contribution degree calculation unit calculating a difference between a ratio of the divided word in the high-similarity group and the ratio of the word in the low-similarity group and designating the difference as a contribution degree of the word.
9. (original) A retrieval apparatus for extracting data similar to a question word by retrieval and displaying a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction together with a corresponding word on a screen, comprising:
  - a word designation unit designating a word displayed on the screen; and
  - a weighting unit weighting the word designated by the word designation unit for the retrieval.

10. (original) A retrieval apparatus, comprising:  
a question sentence input unit inputting a question sentence for retrieval;  
a retrieval execution unit dividing the inputted question sentence inputted by the question sentence input unit into words, retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved for each of the divided words, and extracting data similar to the question sentence inputted by said question sentence input unit;  
a word contribution degree calculation unit calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction by the retrieval execution unit in a retrieval result extracted by the retrieval execution unit;  
a word contribution degree output unit displaying the contribution degree calculated by the word contribution degree calculation unit together with a corresponding word on a screen;  
a word designation unit designating the word displayed on the screen; and  
a weighting unit weighting the word designated by the word designation unit for the retrieval.

11. (original) The retrieval apparatus according to claim 9, wherein  
said weighting unit weights a word so that data of the retrieval result can be ranked as the top.

12. (original) The retrieval apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising:  
a re-retrieval execution unit retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved and extracting data similar to a word weighted by said weighting unit.

13. (previously presented) A retrieval apparatus for extracting data similar to a question word by retrieval and displaying a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction together with a corresponding word on a screen, comprising:  
a word designation unit designating a word displayed on the screen;  
a weighting unit weighting the word designated by the word designation unit for the retrieval;  
a re-retrieval execution unit retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved and extracting data similar to a word weighted by said weighting unit, and  
wherein said weighting unit sequentially weights a plurality of prescribed data of the retrieval result so that the data of the retrieval result can be ranked as the top and designates

an average of the plurality of weights of the plurality of data as a weight value of the word.

14. (original) A retrieval method, comprising:  
receiving a question sentence for retrieval; retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved;  
extracting data similar to the inputted question sentence;  
calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction in the extracted retrieval result; and  
outputting the calculated contribution degree together with a corresponding word.

15. (original) The retrieval method according to claim 14, wherein  
the corresponding word is outputted in a display format reflecting the contribution degree.

16. (original) The retrieval method according to claim 14, wherein  
the corresponding word is outputted using a font reflecting the contribution degree.

17. (original) The retrieval method according to claim 15, wherein  
the corresponding word is outputted to a display device.

18. (original) The retrieval apparatus according to claim 14, wherein  
the inputted question sentence is divided into words, the database is retrieved for each of the divided words and similar data are extracted.

19. (previously presented) A retrieval method, comprising:  
receiving a question sentence for retrieval; retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved;  
extracting data similar to the inputted question sentence;  
calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction in the extracted retrieval result; and  
outputting the calculated contribution degree together with a corresponding word, and  
wherein the inputted question sentence is divided into words, the database is retrieved for each of the divided words and similar data are extracted, and  
wherein the calculation obtains both a group of documents with high similarity and a

group of documents with low similarity from the retrieval result, calculates a difference between a ratio of each divided word in the high-similarity group and a ratio of the word in the low-similarity group and designates the difference as a contribution degree of the divided word.

20. (original) A retrieval method for extracting data similar to a question word by retrieval and displaying a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction together with a corresponding word on a screen, comprising:

designating a word displayed on the screen; and  
weighting the designated word for the retrieval.

21. (original) A retrieval method, comprising:  
inputting a question sentence for retrieval;  
dividing the inputted question sentence into words;  
retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved for each of the divided words;  
extracting data similar to the inputted question sentence;  
calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction in the extracted retrieval result;  
displaying the calculated contribution degree together with a corresponding word on a screen;  
designating the word displayed on the screen; and weighting the designated word for the retrieval.

22. (original) The retrieval method according to claim 20, wherein the weight is attached so that the data of the retrieval result can be ranked as the top.

23. (original) The retrieval method according to claim 20, wherein a database storing data to be retrieved is retrieved and data similar to the words to which the weight is attached are extracted.

24. (previously presented) A retrieval method for extracting data similar to a question word by retrieval and displaying a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction together with a corresponding word on a screen, comprising:  
designating a word displayed on the screen; and  
weighting the designated word for the retrieval, and,

wherein database storing data to be retrieved is retrieved, data similar to the words to which the weight is attached are extracted, the weight is sequentially attached to a plurality of prescribed data of the retrieval result so that the data of the retrieval result can be ranked as the top and an average of the plurality of weight of the plurality of data is designated as a weight value of the word.

25. (original) A retrieval program for enabling a computer to execute a function, the function comprising:

- receiving a question sentence for retrieval;
- retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved;
- extracting data similar to the inputted question sentence;
- calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction in the extracted retrieval result; and
- outputting the calculated contribution degree together with a corresponding word.

26. (original) A retrieval program which enables a computer for extracting data similar to a question sentence by retrieval and displaying a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction together with a corresponding word, to execute a function, the function comprising:

- designating the word displayed on the screen; and weighting the designated word for the retrieval.

27. (original) A retrieval program for enabling a computer to execute a function, the function comprising:

- inputting a question sentence for retrieval;
- dividing the inputted question sentence into words;
- retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved for each of the divided words;
- extracting data similar to the inputted question sentence;
- calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction in the extracted retrieval result;
- displaying the calculated contribution degree together with a corresponding word on a screen;
- designating the word displayed on the screen; and weighting the designated word for the retrieval.

28. (original) A retrieval apparatus, comprising:

question sentence input means for inputting a question sentence for retrieval;

retrieval execution means for retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved and extracting data similar to the question sentence inputted by the question sentence input means;

word contribution degree calculation means for calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to extraction by the retrieval execution means in a retrieval result extracted by the retrieval execution means; and

word contribution degree output means for outputting the contribution degree calculated by the word contribution degree calculation means together with a corresponding word.

29. (previously presented) ) A retrieval method, comprising:

performing a multiple word search of a database for a user;

supplying the search results to the user; and

indicating to the user a weight of each word contributing to the search results.